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SKETCH OF BABYLONIAN AND ASSYRIAN HISTORY WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO PALESTINE DOWN TO THE DIVISION OF THE KINGDOM.

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Earliest data as to Babylonia.—Sargon.—Elamite conquest.—Invasions of Palestine.—New data from recent discoveries.—Palestine and Babylonia in the Bible.—Later revelations.

Looking back over the course of Hebrew history, we can see that the breach created by the division of the kingdom, about 930 B. C., a breach never to be healed, was an event of the greatest consequence in relation to Israel's true mission in the world. It was a necessary step in Israel's progress to her position as the world's religious teacher. It threw a barrier across the path to political and material greatness, and designated Israel as a people destined to struggle and to suffer. Her victories were to be achieved, not by soldiers on fields of blood, but by prophet and by poet in the depths of their own souls.

Less than a century after the division, began those invasions from the east, which were to prove so disastrous from a political point of view. Two centuries after the rupture, and Assyria gave the death thrust to the northern kingdom. Another century and a half, and the southern kingdom was broken forever by Babylon. The history of Israel is thus so intimately associated with Assyria and Babylon that large parts of the Old Testament are unintelligible without a knowledge of these countries.

But this immeasurable Babylonian-Assyrian influence in Palestinian affairs was not something new. From very early times it existed, long before Palestine had become the Hebrew home. Recent discovery has brought to light much new information on this subject.

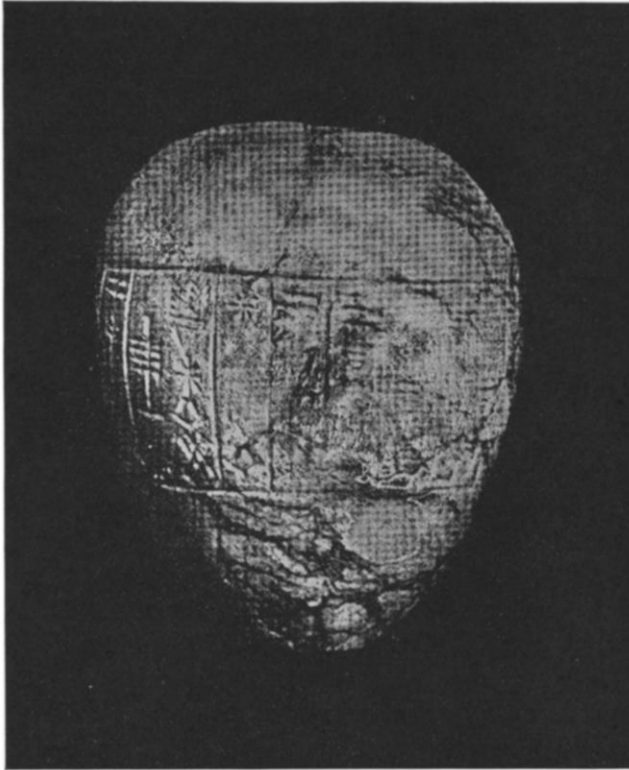
The earliest definite Babylonian date which we possess is that

of *Naram-Sin*, son of *Sargon*, whom *Nabonidus*, king of Babylon (555-538 B. C.) places 3200 years before his own time. This gives us about 3750 for *Naram-Sin*. Can we feel any confidence in a date so remote? Yes, for the following reasons: Babylonia was evidently one of the first countries to attain to civilization; many of the Babylonian remains bear the marks of great antiquity; astronomical observations were made in Babylonia from time immemorial, and the scholars who went to Babylon with Alexander the Great are reported to have sent home records of eclipses found there going back for 1900 years; the historical and chronological feeling of Babylonian kings and scholars was very strong, some of them, like Nebuchadrezzar and Nabonidus, being great antiquarians; from about 2400 B. C. we have lists of the kings of Babylon, grouped in dynasties, with the duration of the respective dynasties and individual reigns; the evident intention and effort to be accurate, as seen in the consistency of later chronological data, inspire confidence in regard to the earlier dates which we have not yet the means of testing.

The remains that have come from this *Sargon*, of such hoary antiquity, are various: a stone seal with inscription and remarkable carving; an egg-shaped marble object with inscription; inscribed door sockets in stone; brick stamps of terra cotta; the record of his birth, exposure in the river (like Moses in the basket), discovery, training and accession to the throne; and the so-called tablet of omens. The last two objects are from the library of Asshurbanipal, copies of older Babylonian originals. According to the omen tablet, *Sargon* made victorious campaigns against the country *Martu*, the name in later times, and therefore, perhaps here also, for the Mediterranean coast-lands, including Palestine.¹ The names *Sargon* and *Naram-Sin* are Semitic, and we may assume that their kingdom, with its capital at Agade in northern Babylonia, was also Semitic. *Sargon's* domin-

¹ There seems to have been a city or district *Martu* in or near Babylonia also, as has been recently pointed out by Prof. Jensen (*Zeitschrift für Assyriologie*, x, 342, Feb. 1896). This cannot, however, be the *Martu* of *Sargon*, which is mentioned in connection with the sea of the setting sun (Mediterranean). One cannot dogmatize regarding the *Martu* of *Ammisatana* and the *Amurri* (= *Martu*) of *Nebuchadrezzar I* (see below), though the indications would seem to point rather to the western region.

ion extended from Elam on the east, which he subdued, to the Mediterranean, and as far south as *Nippur*, where some of his most interesting relics were found by the Philadelphia expedition, (*cf.* Hilprecht's *Old Babylonian Inscriptions*, Part I, 1893). Both



MACE OF SARGON I ABOUT 3800 B. C.

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father and son were great builders as well as successful warriors, and culture in their day was so advanced that we must assume many hundreds of years of development. This assumption is confirmed by the diggings now going on at *Niffer*, which have brought to light objects from a depth far below the strata of *Sargon* and *Naram-Sin* remains (*cf.* articles by J. P. Peters in "American Journal of Archæology" for 1895).

We have not yet sufficient data for reconstructing even in dim outline the history before the time of Sargon.¹ Of the cities contemporary with him we know, besides his capital Agade, Babylon and Nippur, of which the last named, seat of the god Bel, is possibly the oldest. Further south were "Ur of the Chaldees," Erech, Larsa, and the city which is marked by the modern ruins known as *Telloh*. The French excavations at *Telloh* have enriched the Louvre with some of its greatest treasures; statues with long inscriptions; immense, jar-shaped, inscribed clay cylinders; records on stone tablets, bronze statuettes, and numerous other small objects (*cf.* E. de Sarzec's *Découvertes en Chaldée*). Both the epigraphy and the art indicate a remote antiquity for these objects, some of them it may be as ancient as the venerable Sargon. The greatest builder among those who ruled at *Telloh* was *Gudka*, and he too seems to have had relations with the western country.

The old cities which have been named were the seats of separate governments, of which several may have been contemporaneous. Of the rivalries between these we have clear indications in the meager records. Governments partaking more of a national character arose when some warrior king brought several of these cities under one scepter, or when the separate rulers combined for protection against a common foe. Thus matters stood, so far as our information reaches, for many centuries after the times of Sargon and the earlier *Telloh* rulers.

Not far from 2300 B. C. the Elamites, whose home was to the east of Babylonia, invaded the land and carried off from the city Erech a statue of the goddess Ishtar. In a campaign against Elam, Asshurbanipal (668-626 B. C.) recovered this object, 1635 years after its capture, and restored it to its shrine. Whether this Elamite incursion was only a raid, or whether the invader

¹ Since this paragraph was written there has appeared the second part of Hilprecht's *Old Babylonian Inscriptions*, in "Transactions of Amer. Philos. Soc.," N. S. Vol. XVIII, No. 3, Phila., 1896. On the basis of new records from the diggings at *Nippur*, Hilprecht undertakes a "tentative" statement of some of the great events antedating *Sargon*. One of these, according to Hilprecht, is the establishment by *Lugalzaggisi*, not later than 4500 B. C., of a kingdom extending from the Mediterranean to the Persian Gulf, pp. 44, 53.

actually assumed control of the land, we cannot say definitely. But the latter alternative is true, if we are to assign to this date the political allusions in the great Babylonian poem, commonly known as the *Izdubar-Epic*. One of these describes the distress of



DOOR-SOCKET OF SARGON I

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From *Babylonian Expedition*, Univ. Pa.

Erech under the rule of an Elamite tyrant, who was afterwards slain by Izdubar. Of course, it is possible that the allusion here may be to some still more remote event.

However this may be, it is clear that the king who made Babylon supreme, not far from 2250 B. C., had also to deal with the Elamites. He prevailed over these and over all the native rivals of Babylon, and thus gained for this city and for her god *Marduk* (Merodach) a preëminence which they never lost. This

warrior king was the sixth in the first of the dynasties ruling at Babylon, a dynasty so prosperous that its eleven kings averaged about twenty-eight years to the reign. His name was *Hammurabi*. He enjoyed a reign of fifty-five years, the longest of any king in the dynasty. He was not only successful at arms, but was also a famous builder and a digger of canals. In the *Sunday School Times* for Oct. 12 and Nov. 2, 1895, Prof. Fritz Hommel has undertaken to prove that this dynasty was of Arabic origin. However this may be, they were in spirit, if we may judge by the writings of Hammurabi, thoroughly Babylonian.

If Ur of the Chaldees (Gen. 11:28), whence the ancestor of the Hebrews migrated, be the old Babylonian city *Uru*, represented by the modern ruins *Mugheir*, the migration probably took place during the dynasty to which Hammurabi belonged. Political changes at home and the prospect of bettering their fortunes in the West may have led Abram and Lot to turn their faces towards Canaan. Their route passed through the ancient commercial center, Haran. Recent discovery shows that Haran was in later centuries a seat of the Moon cult. If this was also the case at the time of the migration, we can see a special reason why the emigrants pitched their tents here; for the worship of the Moon was the special form of religion to which they had been accustomed at Ur. One of the most noteworthy of ancient hymns comes from the temple of the Moon-god at the city just named. But Abram is impelled still further to the West by a sublime faith in the future, and into the land of Canaan he comes (Gen. 12). He comes, we may suppose, not into a region that was utterly unknown. He may have heard much of it from traders or from soldiers returning from the campaigns. For there is great probability that the two invasions of Gen. 14 would be not exceptional, but the rule, if we only had fuller records of the times.

When did these invasions occur and who were the invaders? "In the days of Amraphel king of Shinar, Arioch king of Ellasar, Chedorlaomer king of Elam, and Tidal king of Goiim." The localities are all identified: Shinar with *Shumer*, a Babylonian region including Babylon itself; Elam with the mountain,

land east of Babylon; Gouiim with the *Guti*, a nomadic people living on the Babylonian borders; and Ellasar is probably the city *Larsa*. As to the kings, Amraphel of Shinar or Babylon, to judge from the name, is one of the rulers of the first dynasty. Three of these have names beginning with *Am* or *Ham*, namely, *Hammurabi*, *Ammisatana*, and *Ammisaduga*. No ruler of the next dynasty of 368 years has a name beginning thus. If Amraphel be one of the three names just given, Hammurabi is the one which comes nearest. The two forms are not more unlike than *Asshur-banipal* and Osnappar (Ezra 4:10) or than *Nabium-kudurizur* and Nebuchadrezzar. While Chedorlaomer has not been certainly identified, the form of the name is clearly a compound of *Kudur* (like many other Elamite names, as *Kudur-mabuk*, *Kudur-nan-khundi*) and the name of the Elamite god *Lagamaru*. Arioch of Ellasar seems to be Erim Agu of Larsa, also of Elamite stock.¹

With these identifications we may say that the invasions of Gen. 14 took place while Elam overshadowed Babylonia, and before Hammurabi felt strong enough to break the power of the foreigner. The account fits so well into our knowledge of the times that there seems to be no good ground to call the fact in question. If these conclusions are just, we may be sure that Hammurabi has left a record of the war, and this may come to light any day.

From Ammisatana, great-grandson of Hammurabi, we have the copy of an inscription in which this ruler, among other titles, calls himself "king of the land *Martu*" (*Records of the Past*, New Series V, 103.) We have already seen that *Martu* was the Mediterranean coastland. Whether Ammisatana employed this title by inheritance or by right of conquest, we cannot say, but we may reasonably hold that in his day, about 2150 B.C.,

¹In January last Mr. T. G. Pinches read at the Victoria Institute an account of some mutilated cuneiform tablets belonging to the British Museum, on which he has found the names *Kudurlachgumal*, *Eri-ekua*, and *Tudchula* which he identifies with the Chedorlaomer, Arioch and Tidal of Gen. xiv. The first-named is called "king of Elam," as is Chedorlaomer. While there is no reference on these tablets to the invasion of Gen. xiv, the reading and identification of Mr. Pinches, if correct, are of very great interest.

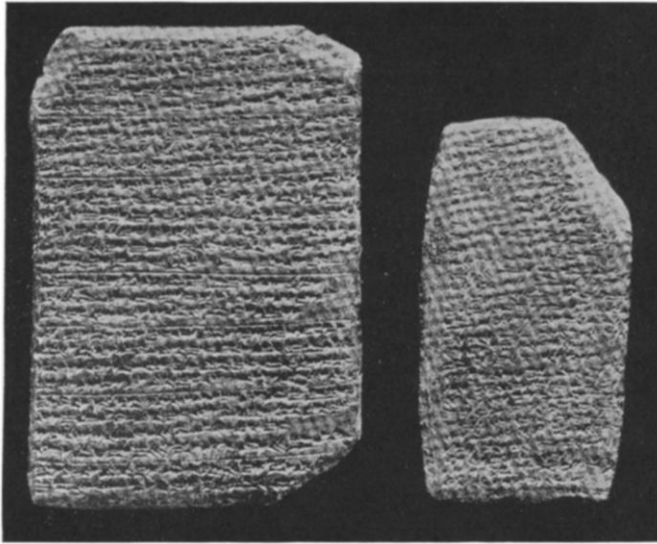
Babylonian politics and culture were supreme in Phœnicia and Palestine. Whether this remained so till the 15th century, B.C., is uncertain, but if not, there must have been still another occupation of the land after the time of Ammisatana. This is evident from the El-Amarna discovery, of which more below.

Of the second dynasty, with its eleven kings ruling for 368 years, the political history has not yet been recovered. The third dynasty, with thirty-six kings, began in the 18th century, B.C., and lasted 576 years. It was not of Semitic but of Cassite origin. As ruling class, the Cassites intermarried with the Babylonians and adopted the Babylonian language and culture. During the reign of this dynasty Assyria, a colony from Babylonia, comes into prominence and wages frequent wars with the mother country. The advantage is sometimes with one and sometimes with the other contestant, and we have a record of several settlements of boundary disputes (*cf. Records of the Past*, New Series, IV, 27). The excavations by the Philadelphians at Niffer have added much new material to what was hitherto known of this dynasty.

But the central interest for us in the present connection lies in the relations of Palestine to the Cassite dynasty and to Babylonian culture. In the Egyptian ruins called El-Amarna, were found in 1887, some 300 clay tablets covered with writing in the Babylonian-Assyrian script and language. These were part of the royal archives of Amenophis III and Amenophis IV, whose date seems to be the second-half of the 15th century, B.C. These tablets were sent to the Pharaohs, in part by kings and in part by persons of lower rank. The kings are those of Babylon, Assyria, Mitanni and Alashia. The correspondence relates to intermarriage, the transmission of gifts and greetings, the establishment of commercial treaties, the punishment of offenders, etc., and may be called "diplomatic" and international, but with a strong mixture of the personal element. A draft or copy of one of the letters from the Pharaoh to the king of Babylon was also found. That the rulers of Western Asia and of Egypt were in such continuous, friendly correspondence is a new and very interesting fact. But that the correspondence should be con-

ducted in the Babylonian language and script, is still more remarkable and significant.

Two of the tablets contain portions of mythological poems, either from Babylon or Assyria, a fact which shows that the Egyptians felt an interest in the intellectual products of their eastern friends. This may not be without importance when we



TABLET FROM TEL-EL-AMARNA, B. C. 1450

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inquire at what date the Babylonian material of Genesis I-II found its way to Canaan.

Another group of tablets, by far the larger portion, is of the nature of reports from Egyptian officials or vassals stationed in Asia, especially in the countries bordering the Mediterranean. Some of them come from the Phœnician cities Beirut, Tyre, Sidon, and others from various cities of Palestine proper, notably from Jerusalem. These reports throw a welcome light on contemporary political and social conditions in Palestine. To give a detailed account of them does not, however, fall within the scope of this paper. The reader must be referred to such works

as Evetts' *New Light on the Bible and the Holy Land*, or McCurdy's *History, Prophecy and the Monuments*.

The bearings of this great discovery, however, on Babylonian and Palestinian history must be pointed out. The extensive use of the Babylonian language for diplomatic purposes in such early times is startling. If it had been asserted before the discovery of the proof, the assertion would have been considered most improbable. How is this use of the language to be explained? One might view it as the natural result of commercial necessity. Babylonian traders would naturally keep their records in their native language. The peoples with whom or among whom they traded might be obliged to employ the same language in communicating with their Babylonian correspondents. Thus there might come to exist a class of Babylonian scribes in the various countries which had dealings with Babylon. And the commercial use of the language might develop into the diplomatic.

Far more plausible, however, is the explanation that the diplomatic use of the language is the reflection of political events. We have seen that Sargon, Amraphel, and Ammisatana warred against the West. The governors whom they appointed over conquered provinces must have been accustomed to send home regular reports, as we know was done in later Assyrian times. These governors must likewise have had their agents or sub-officers who regularly reported to them the state of affairs in the large cities and towns of the province. Thus there would arise a class of Babylonian scribes throughout the subject region. Foreign youths likewise may have gone up to Babylon as students, or Babylonian schools may have been established in the West, where this language was taught to those who were going to enter the diplomatic or the civil service. Even countries which were not subject to Babylon but were in alliance with her found communication in the Babylonian language the simplest method, and maintained a class of native or foreign scribes for this purpose.

Thus, in a natural, political way the Babylonian language and culture gained a firm hold over western Asia. How much time was required for this can only be conjectured. A half cen-

ture might suffice. But the occupation may have extended over several centuries.



FRAGMENT OF A WHITE MARBLE SLAB FROM ABU HABBA

Date not later than 2400 B. C.

Original in Constantinople

It is evident that not long before the period of the El-Amarna correspondence great political changes had taken place. By conquest Egypt had become the possessor of Palestine. But

the Babylonian culture maintained its hold, and the couriers who formerly went to Babylon bearing their reports written on clay tablets, now went to Egypt on the same mission. We can thus understand the remarkable fact that Palestinian vassals should write to their Egyptian lords in a language which was the vernacular of neither party. How long this continued after the El-Amarna times we have not yet the means of ascertaining.

Have we in the Old Testament any reminiscences of this relation of Palestine to Babylon? In answer we may say, in general, that the picture given in Genesis (12-50) of migrations and intercourse among the peoples is drawn by writers who had knowledge of these early times, whether that knowledge was derived from written or from oral sources. In particular, Gen. 14, which has been a great *crux*, becomes a most precious fragment of antiquity. Furthermore, the social and political conditions in Palestine, when the Hebrew occupation began (Joshua, Judges), especially the relation to one another of the native tribes, are not essentially different from the conditions revealed by the El-Amarna correspondence. The "Babylonish mantle" or "mantle of Shinar" (Josh. 7:21) need not be "a skilfully wrought mantle in the Babylonian style," but is more likely a mantle made at Babylon, which had come by commerce to the distant Palestine. The prostration of oneself seven times before a superior (Gen. 33:3), an isolated fact in the Old Testament, was the rule in the El-Amarna times, and one of the standing formulæ in the tablets addressed to the Pharaohs is, "Before the king my lord I prostrate myself seven times," or "seven and seven times." In regard to the material of Genesis 1-11, which bears such evident marks of a Babylonian source, much of it may have come to Palestine during the period when Egyptian kings were interested in Babylonian poetry, unless, indeed, it came with still earlier wanderings from "Ur of the Chaldees." So suggestive, indeed, is the El-Amarna discovery for the early relations of Babylon to Palestine that the great discoveries still in store for us can hardly excite surprise.

After this time follows a long period of darkness concerning these relations. It is probable that those of a political nature

were for a time entirely interrupted, and that only those of commerce continued to exist. But after some three centuries, the Babylonian king Nebuchadrezzar I (c. 1120 B.C.) styles himself, among his other military titles, "Conqueror of the land of the *Amurri*," *i. e.*, of the Amorites ("Proceedings of the Society of Biblical Archæology," vi, 152). But whether this conquest was confined to the northern region, or whether it also took in that portion of the Amorite territory in which the Hebrews had now settled, remains uncertain.

Following this comes apparently another cessation of relations. We can, perhaps, see a sufficient explanation of this in the native Babylonian-Assyrian history. The rise of Assyria to the position of rival of Babylon, and the frequent wars between the two contestants put a natural check on distant campaigns. Furthermore, the existence of a strong Hittite power on the upper Euphrates acted as a breakwater to the Assyrian floods. When this breakwater was finally swept away, so that Palestine could be deluged from the east, we have already passed beyond the date of the great rupture in Israelitish politics.

Of the Assyrian kings before the Shalmaneser of Jehu's time, we read that Tiglathpileser (c. 1120-1100 B.C.) hunted elephants in the land of Mitanni, but that he or any other king of Assyria or Babylon had direct political relations with Palestine between c. 1120 and 930 B.C. we have no evidence. At the same time, our ignorance justifies us neither in affirming nor in denying such relations. While holding them to be improbable, for the reasons given above, the only justifiable attitude is one of open-mindedness and expectancy.

In the preceding sketch attention has been confined to those epochs and events in Babylonian-Assyrian history which have to do directly or indirectly with Palestine. No effort has been made to give a general view of this history apart from such relations. For such a view the space allotted for this paper is inadequate.